

# Orwell Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies  
reported in Cambridge Newspapers  
summarised by

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the Cambridgeshire Weekly News. They are supplemented by some articles published in the Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library together with have detailed cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at [bit.ly/CambsCollection](http://bit.ly/CambsCollection).

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check. There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – [www.mikepetty.org.uk](http://www.mikepetty.org.uk) for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1900 04 21

A serious bus accident happened in Mill Road, Cambridge. The omnibus was waiting for passengers opposite the Royal Standard public house and while the driver was talking on the path, the horses for some unknown reason bolted. The driver and conductor immediately ran after the horses, but were unable to catch them. Two passengers named Annie & Frances Scull, who were on the top of the 'bus jumped off. When the bus was about to pass the Durham Ox it collided with a market cart belonging to Jonas Wilmott, carrier of Orwell and then another cart in charge of Eli Newman, a hawker, of Bottisham.

1900 11 20

An Orwell farmer was summonsed for being drunk whilst in possession of a loaded revolver on the highway. The rector said he was practising with the choir in the church when the man entered the building accompanied by a dog. He turned the dog out. Shortly afterwards it returned to the church and endeavouring to get it out he made it yelp. Defendant came out of the church and almost immediately discharged a firearm. The rector took hold of the man whereupon he flourished a stick. When near the church gates the defendant fell over and refused to move. The rector sent for the police. The man said he had the revolver to frighten away sparrow from the corn he had been threshing. He was fined £2.

1901 07 10

The discovery of a complete outfit of women's clothing in a hedge on a lonely road at Meldreth remains enshrouded in mystery. A motor car, driven by a man who was alone, was seen to stop near the spot where the clothes were found. The car is a four-seater with a left-hand drive – a peculiarity of those of American manufacture. A woman of about 50 and of stout build was seen to alight from a bus at Orwell and noticed wandering aimlessly from one side of the road to the other. There are several deep pits full of water not far from the spot; these are to be dragged by the police.

1902 01 09

The Rev Weston of Orwell appeared before the Rural District Council with regard to the village water supply. The well had been filled up about 14 years ago at the request of the parish council. Previous to that there was a good supply of water, which was used for drinking purposes. He asked that it be reopened or that another should be dug. What did it matter whether the Parish Council want water or not? The people want water. If they refuse then the RDC should do it. A committee was appointed to go over to Orwell and investigate the matter.

1903 12 28

Addenbrooke's Hospital unfortunately contained many suffers at Christmas but the season of goodwill was ushered in with the usual ceremony. A large number of toys having been sent to the Hospital every child was able to have one. Santa Claus distributed them from a splendid Christmas Tree whose adornment by means of coloured electric lights was most picturesque. Each patient was the recipient of a parcel of clothing through the kindness of the Needlework Guild and Miss Bennett of Orwell. To the patients of the men's surgical and accident wards Mr Joseph Clark made a present of cigars and Mr Leathart, the assistant house surgeon, gave them pipes, tobacco and cigarettes, which were greatly appreciated. If a suitable environment is conducive to recovery from illness the patients must have made rapid progress this Christmas.

1906 05 26

Cambridge General Benefit Society has taken over the Orwell Society which has a membership of 83. A branch has been revived at Waterbeach but the one at Duxford has been without a local manager for some time. They now admit juveniles and women almost on the same terms as men. A history of the society has been written by the Rev J.W.E. Conybeare which shows it is one of the oldest and soundest in the country. 06 05 26a & b

1908 11 17

Caxton Guardians were told of a case of diphtheria in a cottage at Orwell. They heard that the cost of purifying Hardwick water would be £40: it was worse than before, and something must be done. There had also been another burglary at the Isolation Hospital. The knives had been taken away and the intruder had slept in the nurses' bed. (Laughter). CWN 08 11 17 p3

1909 07 02

Licencing – includes Meldreth Bell, Melbourn Old Elm Tree, Orwell Red Lion, Fulbourn Royal Oak, Cottenham Lamb & Lord Nelson, Chesterton British Queen, Prince of Wales, Dry Drayton Queen's head, Swavesey Green Man, Over Hare & Hounds, Balsham Five Awns, Soham Fox-in-wood, Cambridge Prince of Wales & White Horse – CWN 09 07 02

1909 12 03

Lacon's brewery should receive £143 in compensation for the closure of the Red Lion public house at Orwell, the tenant, George Everitt, £16 and the Lord of the Manor £5, councillors decided. They awarded £200 compensation for the Fox and Duck in South Street Cambridge and £325 for the White Horse in Coronation Street. Agreement was also reached on The Bell at Meldreth, The Old Elm Tree Melbourn and the British Queen and Prince of Wales in Chesterton. CWN 09 12 03

1911 12 01

County licencing compensation authority meeting – 11 12 01 & a – includes Red Lion, Orwell

1912 01 05

'Canada, the land of opportunities and work for all' was the title of a lecture at Orwell by Mr F.O. Chapman accompanied by Mr Alfred Suttle, the well-known shipping agent of Fitzroy Street. He has parties leaving every week and those desirous of emigrating should secure their berths with him. The schoolroom was packed with one of the largest audiences ever seen in the village and the lecture, illustrated by beautiful photographic views, was heartily applauded at the close. Cities were springing up like mushrooms, the wondrous fertility of the soil made husbandry enormously remunerative and the Canadian Government offered any man 160 acres of land free. 12 01 05 & a

1913 11 07

George Huddleston, father of Orwell Methodism & wheelwright dies

1914 07 24

Orwell Nags Head pub new plan

1914 10 23

Recruiting Histon, names, Orwell

1914 11 06

Orwell working party soldiers

1925 07 22

Thunderstorms swept the country. When the storm was at its height, a four-valve A.J.S. wireless set at Manor Farm, Orwell was wrecked and considerable damage was done in the sitting room where it was installed. The set was switched off at the safety switch but notwithstanding this the lightning passed through the set and there was a loud explosion, parts of the set being scattered all over the room.

1926 02 15

Cambridgeshire Rural Community Council resolved to purchase three four-valve loudspeaker wireless receiving sets at £20 each, to be sold to villages. They also asked the Women's Institute to sponsor a set, and they had recommended the villages of Orwell and Elsworth. Orwell however, in

view of their village hall enterprise, preferred to wait. Ickleton Men's Club had agreed to take one and it had been ordered and would be installed immediately.

1928 01 07

Everybody's buying parachutes. They are war-time parachutes purchased from the Air Ministry and are being sold at the business establishment of a well-known Cambridge alderman. A friend of mine dropped in to purchase one and was interested to note the date and place of origin stamped on each. The inscription in black lettering reads: "W. Holmes and Son Ltd, Orwell, Cambs". The date was 28th November 1918, just after the Armistice. It is a curious coincidence that these parachutes made for war purposes a few miles from Cambridge had come back nine years later to be sold in a Cambridge emporium for the practical uses of motor car covers, dust-sheets, tents and the like

1929 07 20

Burrells Walk evictions; Orwell scarlet fever

1933 09 07

Orwell villagers assisted in extinguishing a burning lorry owned and driven by H.A. Jude, a village haulage contractor. He was driving from the garage in a narrow lane called Lotfield Street when the engine backfired and flames came up into the cab. A petrol can exploded and the heat was so intense that the dummy ends of the petrol tank, which was nearly full, were melted off. Fortunately it did not explode as a few yards off was a thatched cottage occupied by William Breed and on the other side a house occupied by Mrs C. Jude. 33 09 07

1935 10 23

Since the Rev E.J. White came to Orwell in 1928 he has effected many improvements in the village church and the original 17th-century bells have been re-hung. Four of them were taken down about 60 years ago owing to the weakening of the supporting timbers and left standing at the foot of the tower. Mr White raised £300 to have the five bells recast, re-tuned and re-hung in the belfry which has been strengthened with iron girders. He also installed new heating apparatus and the churchyard has been extended and consecrated. 35 10 23

1936 11 24

An elderly man lost his life in a blaze which completely destroyed three thatched cottages at Orwell in the early hours of the morning. Neighbour Harry Freestone got his own family out and then threw buckets of water on the flames. But the thatch caught fire and he had to leave. Royston and Cambridge brigades arrived just in time to save the Post Office although the Royston pump broke down. The cottages were burnt to the ground, only the chimney stacks being left standing. Deceased always slept downstairs in front of the fire and tied himself to the bed so that he should not roll over into it. 36 11 24a

1938 03 31

Orwell stack fire caused by threshing machine proprietor – 38 03 31

1938 04 25

Electricity would be supplied to Wicken, Hardwick, Barrington, Orwell and possibly Teversham this year. But the Beds, Cambs and Hunts Electricity Company had to abandon a scheme at Fulbourn because of restriction on the overhead line. Telegraph poles had been passing through villages for many years carrying hundreds of wires without undue problems, but as soon as they come along with an overhead line, exception is taken to that. No one liked to spoil nature but it cost double the price to run cables underground bringing the cost per house up from £2 to £5. Six years ago there were 4,615 consumers, now it was 13,145; the number of electric cookers had risen from 526 to 2,039 38 04 25c

1939 01 27

Shepreth and Meldreth ratepayers objected to the new water extension scheme. Everybody would pay an extra rate, whether they used the water or not. But there were 39 artesian springs in Meldreth that

could all be made to run to a small pump. Water supplies in Orwell were inadequate and unsafe, being favourable to an outbreak of typhoid. The Government evacuation scheme made a pure supply a necessity for children coming from London: they would not be used to well water and serious illness might break out. 39 01 27a

1943 08 06

Old Register. The following note by the Vicar appears in this month's Parish Magazine (at Melbourn): The first names in the burial register of 1558 are Campion, Atkinson, Luddington and Poole. All these names are no longer found in the parish. Soon after occurs the names that are still with us — Stockbridge, Webb, Smith, Collis and Ingre. A correspondent adds: "Melbourn's 385-years-old register is one of the oldest in the district, the starting date of some of the others being Orwell 1560, Fowlmere 1581, Shepreth 1569 and Meldreth 1681. It may also be recalled that after various unsuccessful attempts, commencing in 1538, to secure a proper register of births, marriages and deaths in a village, it was not until July 1, 1837 that the present system of registration was established in England and Wales, Scotland followed in 1854 and Ireland in 1863." 43 08 06

1944 03 25

Golden Wedding. Mr. and Mrs. Good, of Windy Ridge, Harlton, are celebrating their golden wedding today. Mrs. Good is a native of Orwell, and lived for many years in London until Mr. Good's health failed. They then returned to Windy Ridge. They have one daughter, Mrs. Pryse Lloyd, of Streatham and they suffered the loss of their only son some years ago. 44 03 25

1947 06 12

A report by the Bishop of Ely's Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches considered eight churches which were in danger of partial collapse. Typical examples are the fine medieval towers of Soham and Orwell, the interesting chancel of Hatley St George, the roof of Caxton and almost the whole church of Wicken, which is splitting in half. There were also a large number of churches where considerable repair was needed now to prevent serious decay later. Some of the failures could be attributed to soil subsidence or rough weather, but for the most part were due to the accumulation of repairs postponed because of the war

1949 10 11

Sir – I note with interest remarks about cinema entertainment particularly in reference to the 16 mm Film Exhibitors Guild. The Guild is well represented in this area. Mr Maddox of Orwell, trading as County Mobile Cinemas; Wrights Ltd of Cambridge, trading as Wright Mobile Cinemas and Mr Oddy of Waterbeach, trading as Globe Cinema Service. The Chairman is Mr David of David Film Library, Wisbech, a well-known film renter and mobile exhibitor.

1953 04 08

After an all-night search a Meteor jet fighter from R.A.F. station, Bassingbourn, was found near Field Barn, Orwell. The pilot's body was found in the wreckage. At midnight last night the BBC broadcast an appeal for the plane when it was reported missing on a routine flight. Police were asked to look out for the aircraft which was eventually found by an R.A.F. search plane. Mrs D.L. Hallett of Orwell said she was watching her television set when the house was shaken, but she did not hear what had happened until morning. Elsewhere in Orwell nothing was heard.

1955 03 07

A strong bleak wind driving the flames on two of a row of four thatched cottages at Fisher's Lane, Orwell, made operations difficult for the firemen. But by their combined efforts they confined the blaze to the roofs and upper rooms and completely saved the rest of the row from damage. The damaged cottages were occupied by 80 year-old Mrs Waldock and Mr & Mrs Titchmarsh. They were able to escape without injury and a band of willing helpers did what they could to rescue belongings until the arrival of the appliances. 55 03 07

1956 05 07

An auction of 'Maypole Farm' Orwell, being sold on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, collapsed after an 87-year-old farmer protested. Mr Richard Long told bidders: "I claim this farm is mine. I owned it for 33 years, then the Ministry took it away from me by compulsory purchase. If anybody buys it he has got me to deal with". It was illegal for a Government department to sell property acquired by compulsory purchase, he said. After the protest there were no bids from the farmers present and it was withdrawn. 56 05 07a

1958 06 25

A beautiful window above the altar of Orwell church was dedicated by the Bishop of Ely. It was erected in memory of the Rev. R.W. Whiston who was Rector from 1896 to 1917 and left money for the window. It depicts stages in the life of St Andrew and has been cleverly painted by L.C. Evetts to complement the old church and at the same time maintain the originality of contemporary work. 58 06 25

1959 07 17

As long as anyone can remember a board about five feet square has hung on the tower wall of Orwell parish church. It was obviously a Royal Coat of Arms but of what date it was impossible to tell, because of its height from the floor and exceedingly dirty condition. Now because of re-decoration it has been taken down and when the dust of many years was wiped off it became clear the arms were of James II, dated 1686. These are extremely rare and it is hoped £25 can be raised for their restoration. 59 07 17b.

***The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date***

1960 07 22

Cambridge Independent Press feature article on Orwell - 60 07 22 & a CIP

1960 09 30

Cambridge has 32 thatched properties according to a survey. R.C. Lambeth, the Rural Industries Organiser, wrote to Parish Councils who often sent in the wrong number for their village. Often they overlooked the thatched public house in the centre – it was too obvious for them to see. There are three thatched churches, 26 thatched council houses, a clock house at Houghton and a thatched wall at Orwell. But there are only a handful of thatchers to keep them in repair. 60 09 30a

1961 06 01

Orwell Anglicans and Methodists celebrated the restoration work in St Andrew's Church and the 350th anniversary of the Authorised Version of the Bible 61 06 01a

1961 12 09

Five villages, Graveley, Ickleton, Hauxton, Toft and Whaddon, have been stimulated into getting their own village halls through the closure of their local church schools. In the past they have been unable to afford the cost but now hope to purchase the buildings and convert them. The Ministry of Education has made grants for new halls at Stetchworth, Barrington and Lt Shelford while the Carnegie Trust has funded others at Newton, Orwell and Weston Colville. 61 12 09

1976 03 26

Marcus, a three-year-old Shire horse will soon become a familiar sight at Orwell when his owner, coalman Alan Neaves, uses him instead of a lorry to deliver coal in the village. Before becoming a coalman nine years ago he used to work with Shire horses at West Farm, Orwell. "Since then I've always wanted an excuse for having one", he said.

1978 01 06

A councillor went into battle to save three 17th-century cottages at Orwell – armed with a drawing and the heart of an oak tree. Coun. Peter King had sketched the cottages, which had been bought by the District Council in 1966 for £13,000 & were now worth £90,000 for council house building. They

could be fully restored and the council would make a profit. He held up a small lump of wood which came from a ship which fought the Spanish Armada to show how strong the cottage timbers were. The council had recommended the cottages be pulled down to make way for an old people's housing development, but now they will remain standing.

1978 09 27

A wealth of historic architecture has been discovered in a cottage at Town Green Road Orwell which was thought to have been built in the 17th century but now has been dated at 1540. Two original fireplaces have been uncovered along with Tudor beams and windows. It was due to be demolished to make way for an old people's home but a campaign by Coun Peter King led to a change of heart and restoration is now under way. When complete there will be very little change from the outside but internally it will make a fine period home.

1978 12 30

Residents of Fishers Lane and High Street Orwell were surprised on Christmas Eve when each house received a bottle of sherry as a gift from a businessman from Dubai who moved into the village a few weeks before. He said: "It appears to be a genuine village with an established community and I need a quiet life here, away from business. Whatever this village needs I am prepared to help". His commercial interests include construction, property, hovercraft and broadcasting. He would like to build a country club like one he has in Dubai which would provide evening entertainment, Italian cuisine, a crèche and would be open in the afternoon for families.

1981 03 20

Tinned guavas, white peaches, maple syrup and home-cooked ham are not the kind of fare you expect to find in a village shop. But Millers' Stores in Orwell is a bit more special. They stock all the groceries and provisions, fresh fruit and vegetables, wines, bread and cakes from a nearby bakery and much more. The shop feels friendly as you are made to feel welcome. The village is in the fortunate position of having two stores but they are not in competition and each has its own different trade. 81 03 20

1982 03 08

Many smaller country roads have been badly hit by this year's cold weather. Typical is Malton Lane, Orwell, where the hard frost broke up the road surface allowing moisture to get down to the chalk underneath. When there were more severe frosts the chalk almost exploded and came bursting through the surface of the road like rice pudding. The byroad from West Wrating to Six Mile Bottom has been closed as it is dangerous with six-inch deep ruts. 82 03 08a

1983 11 02

Things looked grim for Orwell, which 25 years ago sported 12 pubs, when the last was closed by Whitbreads on the retirement of the landlord. But Derek and Rose Kimsey bought the 17th century building, restored it and got the whole community involved: 300 people packed the pub on the opening night at the end of September. Now it is a friendly comfortable local serving good food and with 13 pumps. 83 11 02 p19

1985 02 01

Orwell church has completed its set of six bells after a wait of 54. There has been a space in the tower since the other five were rehung in 1931: it had been such a big job that there was not enough money then. Now they have been given a bell from the disused church at Benwick. It has been recast at the Whitechapel foundry in London, rehung under the direction of an expert from Meldreth, John Gibson, and dedicated by the Bishop of Ely 85 02 01

1987 11 21

Orwell windmill converted into house – 87 11 21

1988 06 16



Villagers of tiny Orwell need a 'miracle' to raise £26,000 for the restoration of their parish church. Rev Julian Thompson was flabbergasted when an estimate for the work came through for £66,000 – double the amount expected. If the money is not raised the church of St Andrew is in danger of being declared redundant. Similar problems affect Arrington where £18,000 is needed to repair St Nicholas' and Croydon where All Saints church requires £10,000 spending on it. 88 06 16b

1990 01 03

A bridge between Meldreth and Orwell which spans the River Cam at Malton Lane collapsed on Christmas Day morning after part of a buttress was washed away during storms. County engineers say it will cost about £50,000 to replace and they may construct a temporary bridge during reconstruction. The choice is whether to repair the bridge or rebuild it. The road may be closed for two months – 90 01 03